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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3351
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4721
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0623
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY 2892
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1350
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2197
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 003164

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: STUDENT LEADERS FEEL LEFT OUT OF NEPAL'S POLITICS

REF: KATHMANDU 3089

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

1. (C) In meetings December 1 and 2 in Kathmandu and Biratnagar (eastern Nepal), student leaders from a range of political parties told Emboff that they were feeling increasingly left out of politics in Nepal. Although they disagreed on many social issues, they were united on the need for greater inclusiveness and internal democracy within the parties, as well as a voice for youth in the upcoming Constituent Assembly elections. Leaders in both locations were considering ways for the different parties' student groups to work together to create a unified front to represent youth. They reported that Maoist student groups continued to engage in violence and intimidation against groups from the other parties, both in the capital and in the countryside.

Students Feel Left Out Of Politics

2. (C) On December 1 and 2, student leaders in Kathmandu and Biratnagar complained to Emboff that they felt increasingly left out of party politics. They complained that students had played the determining role in the People's Movement in April but now the parties had turned their backs on them. Students also complained about a lack of inclusiveness in the parties. The younger generation was kept out of leadership positions and did not participate when policies and programs were being formulated. This privilege was reserved for older members of the parties or family members of the leadership. The students complained that, unless they agreed to be "puppets of the leadership," they were encouraged to leave the party, or were forced out. Parul Chhetri, student leader of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) in Biratnagar, told emboff that the political leaders gave "false and hollow promises" to student leaders in exchange for loyalty, but students were quickly catching on.

A New Front For Youth Voices

13. (C) Students in both locations told Emboff they wanted to create a "unified front" to represent the voice of youth. There were hundreds of thousands of youth in the country who would be voting for the first time in the upcoming elections, they said. The students felt that if they could mobilize this bloc of voters, then the party leadership would be forced to listen to them and include them in the governance of the nation. Student leaders stated that, although they disagreed on many of the major social issues, they agreed that working together was the only way to gain power in the system. They were concerned that the only party that had strong youth representation currently was the Maoists and that the Maoists continued to gain popularity among young voters.

Maoist Intimidation Continues

14. (C) Students complained that Maoist intimidation continued in the countryside and in the Kathmandu Valley. Rupesh Khatiwada, a CPN-UML student leader in Biratnagar, said that students on his campus had recently attempted to hold elections, but when the Maoist candidate realized he was losing, he had called his militia members to the campus and "suddenly, everyone was voting for him." Khatiwada said that stories like this were common in campuses in eastern Nepal. The other student leaders in Biratnagar agreed. Gagan Thapa, a Nepali Congress (NC) student leader in Kathmandu, shared a recent incident where Maoist students had stormed onto a campus in Kathmandu and attempted to enter the NC student offices. Thapa said that the Maoist students had arrived

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with knives, swords and guns, and when the NC students refused to let them in, they attacked. Nine motorcycles were destroyed in the attack and 14 NC student leaders ended up in the hospital with minor injuries.

15. (C) The students said that, if a student leader had national name recognition, then that leader could participate actively in politics freely almost anywhere in the country. The problem, they said, was on the local level, where the Maoists still threatened student activists. Thakur Gaire, a Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D) student leader, recounted that he had participated in an NC-D student program outside of Pokhara (central Nepal). While he was present, there were no problems, but after he left the local Maoist student group had forced local NC-D student leaders to leave the community. Other students also indicated that they had heard similar stories across Nepal.

Police Have A Double Standard

16. (C) Gagan Thapa complained that the police had a double standard for Maoists. When the Maoists began their attack against the NC, the police watched and then left the campus premises. However, the next day, when the NC students joined a protest against the government, the police immediately intervened, using tear gas and water cannons. Other students in Kathmandu agreed that the police had a double standard for dealing with Maoists as opposed to others who broke the law. One student thought that the police might be afraid of the Maoists and for that reason did not try to stop them.

Comment

17. (C) Student leaders are becoming more and more frustrated by their lack of participation in mainstream politics. It is promising that they are beginning to work together to create a unified front to counter Maoist political activism in rural Nepal. Their willingness to do so in the face of a continuing pattern of Maoist intimidation is particularly praiseworthy. The students expressed their appreciation for

Post's efforts to reach out to them and hoped for support for greater youth participation in democratic politics in future.

Student leaders have a chance to make a real difference in the coming days and weeks, and we will continue to encourage them to play an active role leading up to the Constituent Assembly elections scheduled for June 2007.

MORIARTY